

A TORNADO OF FLAME

Sweeps Away Half a Million Dollars' Worth of Business Property

IN THE HEART OF THE CITY

A Natural Gas Explosion in the Weldon Block Just Before Midnight Started a Fire

THAT SOON GUTTED THE BUILDING.

A Blazing Arch Then Stretched Across Diamond, and the Germania Bank Was an Easy Prey.

HASTY EXODUS OF THE NEIGHBORS.

Thousands of People Thronged Upon the Streets and Watched the Fight Against the Progress of the Fire.

DETAILS OF THE LOSSES AND INSURANCE.

The business center of the city was at midnight visited by a fire, of such intensity and rapid action as, for fully an hour, threatened to merge into a conflagration of unparalleled fierceness and destructiveness.

ing near the bar when, as he glanced across the street, he saw a sheet of flame burst from one of the rear windows of the book-store. He says it was hardly an instant before there was the sound of an explosion and the flames were shooting across the street.

There was practically nothing of value saved from the Reinmann building. It was filled with everything that goes to make up a first-class restaurant, where from 300 to 400 people dine daily. The restaurant building runs back to the rear of the structure adjoining the bank on



WOOD AND DIAMOND STREETS AT MIDNIGHT.

the south. This is also owned by the Merchants and Mechanics' Insurance Company and the lower floor occupied by their offices.

For a time it looked as if the Peoples' Bank building at the southeast corner of Diamond and Wood streets would also fall a victim to the flames.

The residents in the houses adjoining Reinmann had an exciting time. No one could form an idea as to where the flames would be arrested.

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NO NEGRO SOLDIERS

Allowed in the Ranks of the District of Columbia Militia.

TWO BATTALIONS MUSTERED OUT.

Arousing Great Indignation Among 60,000 Colored Citizens.

CONGRESSMEN BACK OF THE SCHEME

(FROM A STAFF CORRESPONDENT.) WASHINGTON, March 11.—The drawing of the color line in the Womans Club caused much excitement in fashionable social circles, but very little among the colored people themselves, but another occurrence, an outcome of certain legislation, has caused a flurry and irritation among the people of that race in the District greater than has been known in many years.

Congress refused to appropriate the usual amount for the equipment of armories, drill and encampment of the district militia. The annual sum was greatly reduced. Now it appears it was a part of a scheme to get rid of the colored troops. At least it is announced by General Ordway, commander of the District militia, that the Seventh and Eighth Battalions made up of colored companies, will have to be dropped from the muster roll.

The Colored Contingent Wildly Excited. A communication to this effect to the officers of the militia on the ground that it would intensify feeling among the colored people, and a meeting of the colored militia in progress this evening at which speakers denounced the action of Congress and of the officers as a deliberate attempt to drive the colored people from the District troops.

These colored companies, excellently drilled and with good bands, were the pride of the 60,000 District Militia.

General Ordway's official notification to Major Fleetwood and Revella was the cause of a great deal of heated comment among the colored people. The amendment, one officer, who has just resigned his commission, talked with a number of those who wear shoulder-straps in the Seventh and Eighth, and as a result he prepared the following criticism and requested its publication:

"General Ordway has just notified me that he has removed for a long time that the General was desirous of eliminating the colored militia in order to appease

who objected to appropriations for the support of the militia on the ground that it would intensify feeling among the colored people, and a meeting of the colored militia in progress this evening at which speakers denounced the action of Congress and of the officers as a deliberate attempt to drive the colored people from the District troops.

The question now is, will the Secretary of War or the President permit this outrage? The colored people are among the best patriots in the country, and they will respond to the call, and are both organizations. To disband them will be equivalent to saying that in the District of Columbia negro militia will not be tolerated, though the colored people comprise one-third of the population and are to a large extent taxpayers.

They indignantly insist that the colored troops have been done already. They have been kept longer in camp than the white troops. Their officers have been snubbed, and they are not permitted to take away their arms. We are not permitted to join the militia, and now are not to be kept in the militia. I am sure, will not approve this action.

A GUATEMALAN SUBSIDY For a Steamship Line Between That Country and Baltimore.

WASHINGTON, March 11.—The department of State has been informed that the Government of Guatemala has entered into a contract with the Guatemalan Steamship Company for the establishment of a line of steamers between Guatemala and Baltimore, Md.

The company agrees to carry free of cost all employees of the Government and to transport for the Government all mail, baggage, and other articles imported for the use of the Government, also to carry all immigrants from Guatemala to the boundary of Maryland, and to carry all immigrants from the boundary of Maryland to Guatemala, and to carry all immigrants from Guatemala to the boundary of Maryland, and to carry all immigrants from the boundary of Maryland to Guatemala.

ESTIMATED LOSSES. OVER HALF A MILLION DOLLARS WENT IN THE FIRE.

Weldin & Co. Thought to Be the Heaviest Losers, With Duna & Co. Next—Germania Bank Building Will Have to Be Rebuilt.

The total losses as near as could be estimated this morning were \$553,100. These estimates include the damage by water. The list of the tenants and owners of the buildings together with the estimated individual losses are as follows:

The Weldon block, Nos. 425 to 428 inclusive, owned by David Gregg, Mrs. O'Hara, Edward McKee and William Morrison, occupied by J. W. Wilson & Co. books. Loss on building, \$81,100; stock, \$123,000.

No. 431, occupied by David Gregg, occupied by Cain Brothers, boots and shoes retail. Loss on building, \$20,000; stock, \$50,000.

No. 432, owned by James Herdman, occupied by Wm. M. Laird, boots and shoes retail. Loss on building, \$10,000; stock, \$46,000.

No. 433, owned by J. M. Dennison, occupied by Baltimore and Ohio Express Company. Loss on building and fixtures, \$5,000.

No. 434, owned by Mrs. L. Dennison, occupied by Warr's book store. Loss on building, \$4,000; stock, \$2,000.

No. 441, owned by Mrs. S. A. Sawyer, occupied by Paulson Iron, hats and furs. Loss on building, \$2,000; stock, \$1,000.

No. 442, owned by Mrs. B. Braden, occupied by McKnight's book store. Loss on building, \$1,500; stock, \$1,000.

No. 443, owned by Mrs. A. H. Boss, occupied by Dennett's hats and cap store. Loss on building, \$1,000; stock, \$1,000.

No. 444 and 445, owned by Gerwig & Hunter and occupied by the Baltimore and Ohio ticket office. Loss on building, \$500; furniture, \$1,000.

Germania Bank building, owned by bank and occupied by bank. Loss on building, \$100,000; stock, \$100,000.

FOR BALLS IN THE HOUSE

Republicans All Pull Together in the House for the Baker Bill.

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When it came up Mr. Lytle, of Huntington, arose and served notice upon the understanding that he would not monkey with the measure while he was present.

In his most expartratingly incisive manner, he informed them this bill was the fulfillment of the Republican party's pledge to the people. Ballot reform was the child of the Republican party and it was perfectly able and ready to take care of its offspring.

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TAX ON MANUFACTURERS.

A BITTERLY CONTESTED BILL PASSES THE SENATE.

It Was Favored by the Farmers, and They Fought Hard for It—The Measure Pretty Sure of Becoming a Law—After Insurance Companies.

(FROM A STAFF CORRESPONDENT.) COLUMBUS, O., March 11.—The measure which has claimed the greatest attention of any during the present session of the Legislature passed the Senate this evening with a slight amendment, which will no doubt be concurred in by the House and the bill becomes a law. It is known as the Rawlins bill, and provides for the listing by manufacturers of all material and finished or unfinished articles in their possession when the assessors call in April.

The measure has brought to the city the representative manufacturers of all the cities in the State and will be the cause of a great deal of interest in the State. The bill had an open discussion before committee last night, and today was the only subject before the Senate. An amendment was proposed to the effect that manufacturers should not be required to include in their statement to the assessor any finished manufactured products, but only raw material. This amendment was rejected by a vote of 23 to 17. The bill was passed for concurrence in the amendments, and the Senate adjourned until the following day.

The farmers claimed the amendment would kill the bill, and the Legislature had already authorized the cities of the State to exempt over \$100,000 to foster the different manufacturing industries. The amendment, in the face of strong opposition, was passed by a vote of 23 to 17. The bill was passed for concurrence in the amendments, and the Senate adjourned until the following day.

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